

*NBRC will support economic development in northern Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and New York*

The House approved \$3 million of funding for the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) Friday, after Rep. Peter Welch successfully amended the Energy and Water appropriations bill (H.R. 3183) to appropriate the first-ever round of funding for the organization.

A federal-state partnership focused on economic development, the NBRC will provide funding and support for the northernmost counties of Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and New York. Modeled after the highly successful Appalachian Regional Commission, the NBRC will develop long-term strategies to promote the success of the region by encouraging inter-state cooperation, federal support and private investment.

Vermont's Caledonia, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille and Orleans counties are among 36 counties included in the regional development effort. The NBRC will include representatives from each of the states, as well as a presidentially-appointed co-chair.

"This funding is a major step forward in our effort to promote economic development in the northern tier of these four states. Working together with support from the federal government, our region can successfully overcome the challenges it has historically faced by supporting our communities and creating good jobs," Welch said. "I will continue to fight for more funding for a region that has been particularly hard-hit during this recession, and I am hopeful this is just the beginning of an essential public investment."

The House passed a Welch-sponsored bill creating the NBRC in October 2007. After it was included in the Farm Bill, the measure was passed into law in May 2008. The Energy and Water appropriations bill passed Friday originally included just \$500,000 in funding for the NBRC. Welch worked with Reps. Michael Arcuri (N.Y), Michael Michaud (Maine), Paul Hodes (N.H.) and Chellie Pingree (Maine) to successfully amend it Wednesday to provide \$3 million in funding.